

# Saturday interview

## I'm devastated over my son's death days to his wedding – Father of 25-year-old who died in latrine pit

Adamu Haladu is the father of a 25-year-old man, Haruna Abdullah, who died in a failed attempt to retrieve his cell phone which slipped into a 14-feet-deep latrine pit while easing himself in Aku, Gaya Local Government Area of Kano State on May 1, 2022. He shares his grief with **TED ODOGWU**

**What is the relationship between the late Haruna and you?**

My name is Adamu Haladu. I am 45 years old. I am a native of the Gaya Local Government Area of Kano State, the same local government as Senator Kabiru Gaya, who is representing the Gaya Federal Constituency at the National Assembly.

The deceased was the first of my 10 children from my first wife, whom I have since separated from. As my first son, you can imagine the bond between us.

**How many wives do you have?**

I had two wives but I have since separated from the first, who coincidentally is the mother of my first son, Haruna.

**It was initially reported that two of your sons died in the unfortunate incident, how true is that?**

Haruna, as I earlier told you, was my son. The boy who also died in the pit was his friend. The boy's father is a family friend. They both died in the unsecured toilet. Adamu Danjimmaji forced himself into the pit to rescue his bosom friend. He was trapped and suffocated in the process of descending into the open pit toilet to rescue my son.

**Was your son married and left behind children?**

He was just 20 days away from tying the nuptial knot with his fiancée before death snatched him

away.

**What was his occupation?**

My late son, who lived in Ijora Badiya, Lagos, owned a roadside provisions store, which put food on his table. He was the breadwinner of the family and provided for all my basic needs alongside his brothers and sisters. My son's death has shattered my future as I am a poor man, whose means of livelihood is digging pit toilets for a handful of clients in the Aku rural community where I reside. I have been and still am devastated and in a state of indescribable shock over my son's sudden death.

**Can you recount the circumstances that led to his death?**

My son would not have died if he heeded the piece of advice against entering the latrine pit to retrieve his smartphone. Before informing me of his plan to enter the pit, I too ventured into it but



•Haladu

rushed out moments after due to the lack of oxygen. No sooner had I strolled away from my compound than my son hurriedly rushed into the pit and got stuck midway.

**Were there efforts to rescue him?**

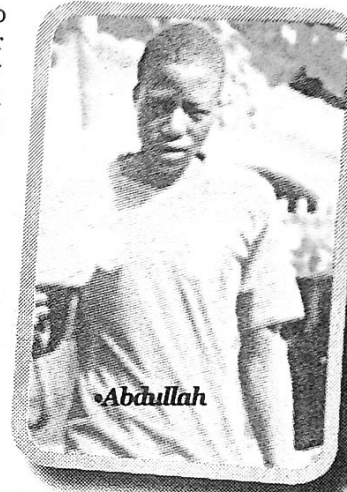
A provisions store owner within the community, Abdullahi Idris, contacted the state fire service, which arrived at the scene moments after. They

wore oxygen masks before venturing into the pit

with twines, which they tied around the lifeless bodies and pulled them out one after the other. At the time they were separately pulled out, they were both unconscious. Thereafter, the firefighters rushed them to the Gaya General Hospital, where they were both pronounced dead. Meanwhile, my son and his friend have since been buried according to Islamic injunction at the makeshift cemetery in the middle of farmland in Aku, a few metres away from their family homes.

**What was your immediate reaction when the news of the death of your son and his childhood friend was broken to you?**

Initially, I did not believe it when the sad news of my son's death was broken to me. Moments later, it dawned on me that he did not heed my advice. As a devout Muslim, I took solace in God, believing that



•Abdullah

he was destined to die the way he did. But the thought of him will dominate my mind for a long time because his death has put a permanent stop to the helping hand I used to get from him.

**How was your wife informed?**

Although Haruna's mother is no longer living with me, the news of my son's death spread into the village like wildfire, during which she heard of it and came over to my home, despite battling an undisclosed ailment.

**How is your family coping with the tragedy?**

By the grace of Allah, my entire family is taking solace in the Almighty, who I believe will wipe away my tears of sorrow and agony. I do believe that it was destined to happen the way it did, so we are coping with the situation.

**What kind of child was Haruna?**

He was a loveable son, who cared for the day-to-day welfare of his parents. Haruna's death has created a vacuum within the family, which will be difficult to fill. He was the breadwinner of the family and regularly contacted me to ascertain my state of health and how I was providing for the basic needs of the family.

**What will you miss most about him?**

I will forever miss his smiles and the demonstration of goodwill, particularly towards his brothers and sisters, irrespective of whether they were born of the same parents. He was a unifying factor in the family, who believed and demonstrated peaceful coexistence. The last time I saw and spoke with him was a few minutes before his death, during which I told him not to venture into the pit toilet. I least envisaged that it would be my last encounter with him.